



Vicar's Letter January 2020

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! As we step into a new decade it is good to remember that whatever the future may hold Jesus Christ is 'the same yesterday and today and forever' (Hebrews 13:8), and as the writer of the hymn 'Peace Perfect Peace' put it: 'Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown? Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.'

It is with this in mind, that our church motto for 2020 is Proverbs 3:5-6:

**Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.**

I hope that we will take these words to heart, both in our own personal walk with Jesus, and as a church fellowship.

Visiting The Holy Land

Twenty years ago I had the opportunity to visit the Holy Land. To be able to visit the places associated with Jesus' life and ministry is a huge privilege, and something I would encourage every Christian to do, if they have the time and finances for it.

With this in mind, I want to explore the level of interest there may be within St James to visit the Holy Land in 2021. One option is to join the combined Diocese of Carlisle and Diocese of Lancaster pilgrimage taking place from the **8th to the 18th March 2021**. This pilgrimage will be led by Bishop James and Bishop Paul (the Roman Catholic Bishop of Lancaster). On this pilgrimage two nights will be spent in Bethlehem, four nights in the Old City of Jerusalem, and four nights by the Sea of Galilee. The main pilgrim sites will be visited, as well as having the opportunity to engage with people and organisations living in the Holy Land now. Unfortunately travel to Israel is not cheap, and the estimated cost will be around £2000 per person. More information about this pilgrimage will be going out in February.

To register your interest in visiting the Holy Land in 2021 (either with the Diocesan pilgrimage or

another tour) could you please add your name to the sign up sheet at the back of church.

Mission Support Recommendations

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, a reminder that the Mission Support Group is looking for recommendations from the church family about an individual, organisation or project that we could support as a church through our mission giving. The important criteria is that it must be a Christian organisation/charity/individual, and ideally have some link to St James.

Please send your recommendations (with details about the organisation) to Ruth Westfall (email ruth.westfall@fosanet.org) by **Monday 6th January**. These recommendations will be considered by the Mission Support Group, and taken to the PCC for approval.

Leaving A Legacy To St James

I am hugely indebted to everyone who generously supports St James through their time, talents and financial support. We could not do the things we do, were it not for this support. In addition to this I would like to encourage everyone to consider leaving a legacy to St James, so that your support can continue even when you are no longer with us.

No matter how small, every gift that is left to the church can make a significant impact on our mission and ministry. In the past legacies have been used to improve our facilities (e.g. the upgrading of the kitchen in the Parish Centre), or employing new members of staff (e.g. the cost of our new youth worker Ruth).

Our legacy policy is that all donations given to the church should be used for specific projects (rather than helping to pay for the day to day running costs of the church), so you know your legacy will be put to good use.

Please give serious and prayerful consideration about leaving a legacy to St James.

Finding Hope Mission

Members of St James Church are being invited to be involved in the 'Finding Hope Mission' taking place in Carlisle from the **28th March to the 5th April**. This mission is being organised by the Revd Matt Martinson, in conjunction with 'Through Faith Missions'.

There are a number of ways to be involved in this mission, in particular they are looking for people who would be willing to commit to:

- pray for the mission
- join one of the teams to share God's love

There will be a training weekend for those involved in the mission taking place on the **29th**

February, which will not only help prepare people for the week of mission, but also help people throughout their Christian life.

For more information about the Finding Hope Mission, or to get involved please email mission@tp4c.co.uk, or visit www.tp4c.co.uk.

February Half Term Holiday Club

The February Half Term Holiday club will be running from **Monday 17th to Thursday 20th February**. Please save the date, and pray for Kate as she plans the holiday club. Further information will go out in our weekly e-bulletins and notice sheet later this month.

Cornerstone Deputy Manager

The deadline for applications for the post of Deputy Shops Manager at Cornerstone and the Op Shop is **Thursday 9th January**, with interviews scheduled for later in the month. Please pray that we will be able to make a good appointment.

Home Groups

At St James we currently have ten home groups that meet in various locations across Carlisle on a fortnightly basis. Home groups are a great space to deepen friendships, and learn more about the Christian faith in a fun and relaxed environment. This term our home groups will be looking at the 'I Am' sayings of Jesus. If you are not currently in a home group and would like to join one, please speak to either myself or Joan Yarker.

Everyday Faith

#Everydayfaith is a Church of England discipleship campaign offering reflections and prayers to help you find and follow God in everyday life.

Being a follower of Jesus isn't confined to church activities. Most of us will pray or think about our faith at some point during our waking or working day. The reflections, stories and prayers are offered to help us discover more about what it means to live faithfully, hopefully and lovingly as Christians today.

#EverydayFaith is available in: booklet • app • social media • email • audio

To receiving Everyday Faith reflection emails visit www.churchofengland.org/everydayfaith

Growing Leaders Course

Kate Davidson, Esther Blake and Paul Crooks recently completed the Growing Leaders Course. At the celebratory service to mark the conclusion of the course, Paul Crooks, shared the following testimony, which he has kindly given me permission to share:

"I want to start with a big thank you to Eleanor & Ian for their time in leading the course, to our group where we shared tears, laughter, hope and many many thoughts! And thanks to God for His presence, wisdom & protection.

Five years ago I did not know Christ! It seems God has put me on a fast track. Whenever I hear fast track, I always think of the system that gets you through the airport quicker. I am certainly on a journey where only God truly knows my destination along the way. This course has made me stop and take a good look at myself, in particular my character. If I'm:

To be led more *by* Jesus

To lead more *like* Jesus

To lead more *to* Jesus

I needed to strip right back and see God's creation in me, recognise the gifts I have been given. Chisel away at the imperfections that hinder or blindside me. Make lifestyle changes, and most important of all (and if I am honest the hardest one) making time for God.

If I am to be given all these tools, then I need instruction and lessons on how to use them. I need to make time and space for God's word in teaching me. It is safe to say this is a work in progress! I realise I cannot do this on my own. I'm blessed with an amazing wife and daughter, who have endured another side to me over the years and I thank God for their love & patience. I also have my church family. Simon has shown confidence in me by giving me services to lead and the congregation has been encouraging with their positive and constructive feedback. This brought me to the conclusion that it is important we all give thanks, feedback and support to our leaders. I also believe we are all leaders due to the one same task we have all been given which is to share the Good News, Jesus Christ is the only way."

If you are interested in joining the Growing Leaders Course, please have a word with me.

Best wishes

Simon